

The Achievers IAS Academy

Patliputra colony, Near: Tennis Court; Patna. Contact: 8434931877, 7250667974

1. Indo-US Joint Special Forces Exercise (VAJRA PRAHAR 2021).



- The 11th edition of Indo-US Joint Special Forces Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2021 conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh, HP in March 2021.
- The joint exercise by the Special Forces of both the countries is conducted alternatively between India and the United States to share the best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics as also to improve interoperability between the Special Forces of both nations.
- Bilateral military exercises and defence exchanges are an important facet of deepening bilateral defence cooperation between friendly countries. During such events, the armies of participating nations jointly train, plan and execute a series of operations for neutralisation of threats of varied nature with a common aim of countering threats of international terrorism through mutual training and jointness.

2. Ānandam: The Center for Happiness in IIM Jammu.



- Union Minister of Education Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated "Ānandam: The Center for Happiness" virtually. Speaking on the occasion Shri Pokhriyal congratulated IIM Jammu for the new venture and defined the need for Ānandam: The Center for Happiness. He said that incorporating happiness in the academic curriculum of students is a very crucial step towards empowering our nation. This step will take our education system to newer heights, similar to the times of ancient Indian universities like Nalanda and Takshashila. He explained that how Ānandam: The Center for happiness aligns with the National Education Policy 2020 that aims to transform India's education system by 2021.
- He further said that the purpose of establishing 'Ānandam' at Indian Institute of Management Jammu is to bring holistic well-being. Regular physical exercises at the Center will contribute to the wellness at the physical level for both the students and the faculty,
- The Minister also informed that the prime activities envisaged under the concept of 'Ānandam: The Center for Happiness' will be divided into five broad categories, namely, Counselling, Holistic wellness, Elective courses on Happiness Development, Research and Leadership & Faculty Development.
- The Center for Happiness acquires its name 'Ānandam' from the Indian wisdom tradition where the pure consciousness is being as "anandam". "Ānandam" doesn't aim for only happiness but knowing the truth, doing good and enjoying the beauty around. The tagline for "Ānandam" further reinforces its ideology that it will work for the well-being of all. The tagline "Sarvabhūtahiteratāḥ" stands for being always engaged for the well-being of all.

3. Dr Harsh Vardhan addresses Hope Consortium's 'World Immunisation and Logistics Summit'.



- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally participated in a panel discussion on vaccine production and distribution across Asia at the "World Immunisation and Logistics Summit", today.

The Achievers IAS Academy

Patliputra colony, Near: Tennis Court; Patna. Contact: 8434931877, 7250667974

- The virtual conference brought together over 1,000 attendees from around the region and the world in active discussion around tackling key issues facing global supply chains as the world faces the largest and most complex logistical operation in history in an effort to deliver life-saving vaccines worldwide.
 - Dr. Harsh Vardhan showcased India's vaccine administration program; the development of two vaccines in our country- Covishield and Covaxin; the priority pyramid of beneficiaries that targets those above 60 and above 45 with co-morbidities with focus on the recent decision to allow all citizens above 45 and above years for vaccination from 1st April, 2021.
 - More than 61 million vaccine doses have been already administered in our country. We always feel that benefits of the science be delivered to the whole world. 64 million doses have been given to 84 countries under various programs."
 - Development of vaccine was actively and proactively supported by the government; the expert group for vaccine NEGVAC was formed 6 months before their launch which planned each detail of the vaccine, its manufacturing, logistics and administration. Half a dozen of vaccines are under clinical trial and around one dozen vaccines are in pre-clinical trial which are being monitored by the body, Dr Harsh Vardhan stated.
 - Applauding initiatives for collaboration including the HOPE consortium as a welcome step, Dr. Harsh Vardhan observed, "It is going to help in shaping the future policy for equitable distribution of vaccine. This will strengthen the efforts of WHO in their commitment to ensuring that there is a common platform in validation, all manufacturing companies of the whole world are on the same page and all stakeholders are committed to equitable distribution of vaccine.
 - After the launch of the vaccines, we prioritized our health care workers, front line workers, the general population aged 45 and above with co-morbidities and those above 60 years of age, and now all those above 45 years. We also planned the opening of 50,000 centres across the country and trained 7 lakh vaccinators for the exercise, he added.
- 4. Financing Agreements Signed for Digha & Kankarbagh Sewage Projects in Patna, Bihar.**
- Financing agreements for developing STPs and Sewerage network for Digha and Kankarbagh zones of Patna were signed between DK Sewage Project Pvt Ltd (a subsidiary of VA Tech Wahagh) and PFS. The scope of the project includes development of Sewage Treatment Plants of 150 MLD capacity along with sewerage network of over 453 km in the Digha and Kankarbagh zones of Patna, one of the most populous cities on the banks of the river Ganga. This is the first of its kind project which comprises of a mix of Design, Build, Operate and Transfer ('DBOT') scope and Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) scope.
 - With the implementation of Digha and Kankarbagh sewerage projects all the sewage zones of Patna city will be covered with sewerage network and sewage treatment capacity to achieve the objective of the NamamiGange program of preventing any untreated waste water entering the river Ganga. The capacity of Digha STP will be 100 MLD and Kankarbagh STP will be 50 MLD. PFS has agreed to fund Rs 85.84 Cr for development of STPs in the form of long-term debt. This is the second project financed by PFS under the HAM model of development. An earlier one was the Prayagraj sewerage scheme under the One City- One Operator concept through HAM.
 - The 453 Kms of sewage network in the project is to be laid in DBOT model wherein 100% of the contractual payment will be made during the construction period. On the contrary, for development of STPs under HAM, 40% of construction cost will be paid during the construction period of 24 months and the balance 60% will be paid as quarterly annuities along with interest and Operation & Maintenance (O &M), cost during the 15-year operation period. DKSPPL will be responsible for the entire development and operation of both sewerage network and STPs for 15 years of the concession period. The payment during operations period will be subject to achievement of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in terms of treated waste water quality for the STPs.
 - Under the NamamiGange programme, in Patna, 11 sewerage schemes for development of sewage treatment capacity of 350 MLD along with laying of 1140.3 km sewerage network has been taken up at a total cost of Rs 3237 Cr. STP projects in Beur (43 MLD) and Karmalichak (37 MLD) are completed and were inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in 2020. Another STP project at Saidpur (60 MLD) and adjoining network has been completed recently. STP projects are also sanctioned in adjoining towns of Patna namely Danapur, PhulwariSariff and Fatuha.



The Achievers IAS Academy

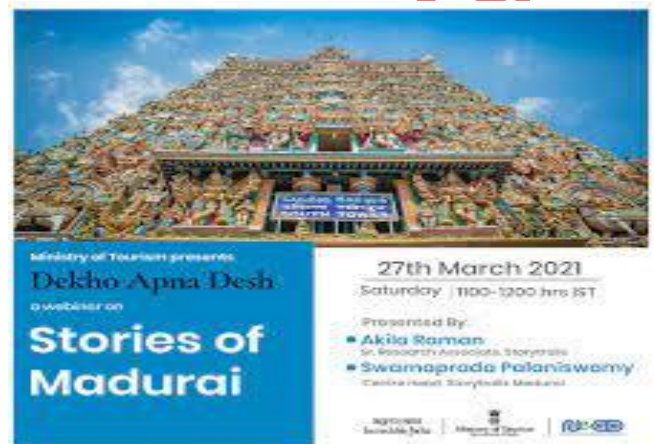
Patliputra colony, Near: Tennis Court; Patna. Contact: 8434931877, 7250667974

5. Government of India Flags off of DEMU Train from Phaltan to Pune via Lonand .



- Shri Prakash Javadekar, Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Information and Broadcasting, Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise, Government of India flagged off DEMU train from Phaltan to Pune via Lonand on 30.3.2021 through video conferencing.
- He also mentioned that under the Hon'ble Minister of Railways, Shri Piyush Goyal's leadership simplified reservation on IRCTC have helped passengers to get tickets faster. Infrastructural inputs like elimination of unmanned railways crossings to ensure safety of highest standards, progress of electrification, doubling, port connectivity in railways have helped to boost economy and growth. More than 5000 Railway stations have been provided with wi-fi which enable passengers to access world wide web and opened their horizon of knowledge.
- A diesel multiple unit or DMU is a multiple-unit train powered by on-board diesel engines. A DMU requires no separate locomotive, as the engines are incorporated into one or more of the carriages. Diesel-powered single-unit railcars are also generally classed as DMUs. Diesel-powered units may be further classified by their transmission type: diesel-mechanical DMMU, diesel-hydraulic DHMU, or diesel-electric DEMU.
- Phaltan-Pune DEMU Train –
- Background
- Introduction of trains between Phaltan and Pune via Lonand will help the people of this region in general and agriculturists to reach new markets, students to reach educational institutions of their choice & workers to seek more green pastures in particular.
- Railways, being the cheapest mode of transport and the direct connectivity between Pune to Phaltan via Lonand will be a boon to the region.
- Further, residents of Phaltan will get direct passenger train connectivity from Phaltan to Pune & back.

6. Ministry of Tourism organises webinar on “Stories of Madurai” under Dekho Apna Desh campaign.



- The Ministry of Tourism's Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series held its 82nd webinar titled "Stories of Madurai" on 30th March 2021. Madurai, one of the oldest living cities, holds the soul of Tamil Nadu in its magnificent and grand temples that are among the finest and most awe-inspiring specimens of architecture in the country. The most spectacular of these is the Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple, which is the heartbeat of the city and is visited by thousands of devotees. Madurai once traded with ancient Rome and it preserves its distinct character in various arts and textiles that have been bestowed by the Pandian kings (4th century-16th century). Legend has it that king Kulasekhara once dreamt of Lord Shiva, from whose hair, drops of sweet madhu (nectar) rolled down on earth. The point where they fell was known as Madhurapuri. Earlier known as Madhurapuri and Thoonga Nagaram, meaning a city that never sleeps, Madurai grew around the Meenakshi Amman Temple, which was constructed 2,500 years ago by Pandian king, Kulasekhara. Popularly called the Athens of the East, it was visited by Greek explorer, Megasthenes in 3rd century BC. Other famous travellers who visited this ancient south Indian city included Pliny in 77 AD, Ptolemy in 140 AD, Marco Polo in 1203 AD and Ibn Batuta (1333 AD).
- One of the largest temple complexes in India, Sri Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple is the most famous spiritual site in Madurai. An excellent example of Dravidian architecture, the temple is sprawled over a huge area, bordered by well-laid gardens and pristine fountains. Two shrines, more than 10 gateways or gopurams, several mandapas (halls) and a giant pool, make up the structure of the temple, which is adorned with beautiful carvings inside and outside. One of the halls of the temple is famous as the "Hall of a 1,000 pillars" though only 985 of them exist today. It is said that whichever direction you view these pillars from, they always seem to be in a straight line. The highlight of the temple is the outermost corridor that comprises musical pillars. These produce different

The Achievers IAS Academy

Patliputra colony, Near: Tennis Court; Patna. Contact: 8434931877, 7250667974

musical notes when tapped. While one of the sanctum, Sundareswarar, is dedicated to Lord Shiva, the other is devoted to Goddess Meenakshi, his consort.

- Madurai is also well known for its exquisite sarees to wooden toys and sculptures. It is also referred as hub of shopping, where visitors can find a fine selection of unique and handmade products.
- After a busy and vibrant sample of the city's bustling streets, tourists can take a respite in the serene and scenic hill stations flanking the city. From the picturesque hill station of Kodaikanal to splendid waterfalls, Madurai is surrounded by natural beauty that leaves you breathless.

7. TRIFED exchanges MoU with the Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Administration for implementation of MSP for MFP scheme and Van Dhan Yojana.



- TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs has recently entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the Administration of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu for the implementation of the MSP for MFP Scheme and the Van Dhan Yojana. The Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes and Minorities Financial and Development Corporation Limited has been appointed as the State Implementing Agency. As a part of its mission to improve the livelihoods of the tribals (both forest dwellers and artisans) and work towards tribal empowerment, TRIFED has been carrying out several programmes and initiatives.
- Under this MoU signed on 5th March, 2021 the Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP' will be implemented in the union territory. To begin with there are plans to set up 1 Van Dhan Vikas Kendra in this Union territory.
- The MSP for MFP is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs that aims to provide remunerative and fair prices to tribal gatherers

of forest produces. The fair prices provided is almost three times higher than what is available to them otherwise and trebles their overall income. Over the last year, it has succeeded in injecting 3000 crores in the tribal economy and has emerged as a beacon of change for the tribals. The Van Dhan Yojana (VDY), a programme for value addition, branding & marketing of MFPs by establishing Van Dhan Kendras to facilitate creation of sustainable livelihoods for the forest-based tribes is a component of the same scheme.

- The Van Dhan tribal start-ups have also emerged as a source of employment generation for tribal gatherers and forest dwellers and the home-bound tribal artisans. This partnership with the Administration of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu and the subsequent implementation of tribal betterment schemes will definitely ensure in improving the livelihood of the tribals in the UT.
- Moreover, the tribals from the UT will have access to larger markets through the Tribes India network – both the physical outlets and Tribesindia.com. TRIFED is currently empanelling new tribal suppliers from this region and soon the Tribes India catalogue will also start including tribal products from Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu thus enabling a far wider reach to the unique products of this region. Generating income and livelihoods for tribal people through such flagship schemes like the MSP for MFP and the Van Dhan Yojana and other significant initiatives is what TRIFED is relentlessly working towards.

8. NITI Aayog Releases Report 'Investment Opportunities in India's Healthcare Sector.'



- NITI Aayog today released a report outlining the range of investment opportunities in various segments of India's healthcare sector, including hospitals, medical devices and equipment, health insurance, telemedicine, home healthcare and medical value travel.
- India's healthcare industry has been growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of around 22% since 2016. At this rate, it is expected to reach USD 372 billion in 2022. Healthcare has become one of the

The Achievers IAS Academy

Patliputra colony, Near: Tennis Court; Patna. Contact: 8434931877, 7250667974

largest sectors of the Indian economy, in terms of both revenue and employment.

- Several factors are driving the growth of the Indian healthcare sector, including an aging population, a growing middle class, the rising proportion of lifestyle diseases, an increased emphasis on public-private partnerships as well as accelerated adoption of digital technologies.
- In the first section, this report provides an overview of India's healthcare sector, including insights about its employment generation potential, the prevailing business and investment climate as well as the overarching policy landscape. The second section highlights the key drivers of growth for the sector and the third elaborates upon the enabling policies and investment opportunities in seven key segments—hospitals and infrastructure, health insurance, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, medical devices, medical tourism, home healthcare as well as telemedicine and other technology-related health services.
- In the hospital segment, the expansion of private players to tier-2 and tier-3 locations, beyond metropolitan cities, offers an attractive investment opportunity. With respect to pharmaceuticals, India can boost domestic manufacturing, supported by recent Government schemes with performance-linked incentives, as part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
- In the medical devices and equipment segment, expansion of diagnostic and pathology centres as well as miniaturized diagnostics have high potential for growth. Further, medical value travel, especially wellness tourism, has bright prospects, given India's inherent strengths in alternative systems of medicine. Technology advancements such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), wearables and other mobile technologies, along with Internet of Things, also offer numerous avenues for investment.

9. Researchers find new butterfly species.



- *Nacaduba sinhala ramaswamii* Sadasivan was discovered a decade ago in Agasthyamalais.

- A group of lepidopterists have added a species to the expanding list of butterflies in India. The discovery of the species *Nacaduba sinhala ramaswamii* Sadasivan, 2021 in the Agasthyamalais in the Western Ghats a decade ago has now found place in the Journal of Threatened Taxa.
- The new taxon of Lycaenid butterflies belonging to the *Nacaduba* genus had been first sighted by a team comprising Kalesh Sadasivan and Baiju K. representing the Travancore Nature History Society, Rahul Khot of the Bombay Natural History Society, and Ramasamy Naicker from Theni. Line Blues are small butterflies belonging to the subfamily Lycaenidae and their distribution ranges from India and Sri Lanka to the whole of southeastern Asia, Australia and Samoa.
- It is the first time that a butterfly species was discovered by an all-Indian research team from the Western Ghats.

10. Centre approves issuance of 16th tranche of electoral bonds.



- Amid the ongoing assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Assam, and Puducherry, the Finance Ministry informed on March 30, 2021, that the issuance of the 16th tranche of electoral bonds will be open for sale from April 1 to April 10.
- According to the press release by the Finance Ministry, the electoral bonds for the elections can be purchased by an individual who is a citizen of India or established or incorporated in India.
- The electoral bonds will be encashed only by an eligible political party. It can be done only through a bank account with an authorized bank.
- **What are the electoral bonds?**
- The electoral bonds have been pitched by the government as an alternative to the cash donations that are made to the political parties. The bonds are part of efforts to bring transparency in the political funding.
- **Which bank is authorized to issue the bonds?**



The Achievers IAS Academy

Patliputra colony, Near: Tennis Court; Patna. Contact: 8434931877, 7250667974

- The Ministry of Finance has informed that the State Bank of India, in the XVI Phase of Sale, has been given the authorization to issue and encash the electoral bonds through its 29 authorized branches wef from April 1 to April 10, 2021.
- **Which political parties will be eligible to receive electoral bonds?**
- The political parties that are registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 will be eligible to receive the electoral bonds.
- The eligible parties must have secured not less than one percent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the Legislative Assembly of the State or House of the People.
- **For how long the electoral bonds will be valid?**
- The Ministry of Finance has informed that the electoral bonds will remain valid for the fifteen calendar days from the date of issue. It must be noted that no payment will be made to any payee political party if the electoral bond has been deposited after the validity period is expired.
- The electoral bond which will be deposited by an eligible political party in its account will be credited on the same day.

ACHIEVERS IAS ACADEMY